

Belfountain Public School ? Caledon?s 2014 Environmentalist of the Year Named

By Bill Rea

The environment has been a major part of the curriculum at Belfountain Public School, and that has not gone unnoticed. Mayor Marolyn Morrison announced last Tuesday that the school has been selected by the Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) as Caledon's Environmentalist of the Year. The award is in recognition of the school's contribution to the stewardship of Caledon's natural environment.

School Principal Tim Pedersen said they got the news last week. "We were very excited to see that," he said.

The school was an early adopter of Education for Sustainable Development, using sustainability as an integrating context for teaching and learning, decision-making, civic engagement, community partnerships and campus practices.

Pedersen the school was nominated by the Caledon Horticultural Society.

"They're quite involved with our school on a very regular basis," he observed, adding they regularly work with the Grade 3 students, going outside and into the environment.

He added the environment is a big part of the curriculum, with a focus on biodiversity and sustainable development throughout all the grades.

"We're very excited and very honoured to have won the award," Pedersen remarked. "I think it's a testament to very dedicated staff and community that wanted to focus on environmental stewardship. Plus, we live in one of the very beautiful areas."

The Horticultural Society is very excited about the recognition too.

Society President Jules Maule-ffinch said volunteers were asked to mentor the students about three years ago in the environmental projects that were part of the Grade 3 curriculum, coming up with "Fun things for the kids to do."

"They like to have the hands-on approach," she added.

Maule-ffinch said the school had a butterfly garden that required little maintenance, and there was a vegetable garden that offered a wide scope of ideas for experiments, etc.

Volunteers from the society spend about 90 minutes with the students every two weeks. They have also facilitated presentations from such groups as the Lyme Disease Association, and the had a bee keeper in to give a talk.

Maule-ffinch said they though that was an appropriate nominee for the award.

"It was a good fit," she said, adding it helps get all the students at the school involved. "These are individuals who will go on and do other good things," she said.

"Congratulations to Belfountain Public School for their work in Caledon," Morrison said. "The school provides exciting learning activities at all grade levels to enrich the standard curriculum. Its obvious commitment to Caledon and to the natural environment is most deserving of this Environmentalist of the Year recognition."

The award will be presented at the Town's Volunteer and Citizen Achievement Awards ceremony April 7. The school will also be inducted into the CEAC Stewardship Grove on the Trans-Canada Trail in Caledon East June 25.

Additionally, the school gets the honour of directing a \$500 Annual Environmentalism Recognition Award to its favourite Caledon-based environmental stewardship project.

